



HOSPITALS *for a* HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

An AHA/EPA Partnership

Innovations Symposium Conference

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Why Work With Hospitals?

- ◆ Medical waste incinerators is 4th largest known source of mercury emissions to environment
 - Mercury is of concern even at low levels in the environment, because it bioaccumulates to higher concentrations thru the food chain
- ◆ Hospitals generate 2 million tons of solid waste annually – 1 % of all municipal solid waste



How Did the Partnership Begin?

- ◆ EPA's Region V developed "Mercury in Medical Facilities" CD-ROM in 1997;
- ◆ Discussion with AHA for distribution of CD-ROM opened the door for larger, cooperative project;
- ◆ A "memorandum of understanding" negotiated in June, 1998 created "Hospitals for a Healthy Environment" effort.



Goals of the Partnership

- ◆ Virtual elimination of mercury from the waste stream by 2005;
- ◆ Reduction of total waste volume by:
 - 33% in 2005
 - 50% in 2010



How to Achieve Goals?

- ◆ Process inclusive of stakeholder groups
 - Creation of “Environmental Leadership Council” to oversee H2E activities;
 - Creation of multiple workgroups to help complete work needed for H2E
- ◆ System for data collection
 - Developed baseline survey to measure current status;
 - Will use same instrument to measure progress.



How to Achieve Goals? P.2

- ◆ Provide assistance and support to member hospitals:
 - Help generate institutional support in hospitals
 - Provide technical support through “how to guides”, educational seminars, other resources
 - Share national success stories, and
 - Provide recognition to hospitals for their efforts



Composition of Environmental Leadership Council (ELC)

- American Hospital Association
- EPA Headquarters and Regions
- State and local governments
- Environmental groups
- Industry representatives
- Hospital departments, including
 - Environmental services
 - Facilities and materials management
 - Physicians and nurses



H2E Workgroups

- ◆ Awards/Recognition
- ◆ Baseline Data
- ◆ Best Practices
- ◆ Chemical Waste Minimization
- ◆ Communications
- ◆ Educational Programming
- ◆ Environmentally Preferable Products
- ◆ Environmental Accounting
- ◆ Ethylene Oxide Minimization
- ◆ Mercury Virtual Elimination
- ◆ Resource Directories
- ◆ Total Waste Volume Reduction



What's Been Completed?

- ◆ Created name and logo for effort
- ◆ Workgroups completed tasks
- ◆ Initiated a pledge program
- ◆ Distributed baseline data survey to sample of hospitals
- ◆ Outreached to state and metro hospital associations
- ◆ Received Hammer Award June 1999
- ◆ Attended numerous conferences
- ◆ Created H2E website
- ◆ Established list serve
- ◆ Created video



What's Next?

- ◆ Develop educational tools for hospitals
- ◆ Create calendar of national conferences/training
- ◆ Complete data collection for survey – analyze results
- ◆ Complete manual
- ◆ Update website and improve content
- ◆ EPA to work with Regional & State government
- ◆ NPPR Spring Conference – training for state TAPs



What Makes H2E Successful?

- ◆ Timing for the issue is right
- ◆ Clear understanding of hospitals' interests in this issue – not necessarily environmental
- ◆ Providing multi-faceted solution, rather than one size fits all solution



Timing is Almost Everything

- ◆ Incidents around the country contributed to higher public awareness of Hg as a problem
- ◆ Completion of Medical Waste Incinerator Rule in 1998 will shut down large number of incinerators, forcing alternatives
- ◆ As a result of industry consolidation, all hospitals look for ways to cut cost in order to stay profitable



Understanding Your Audience

- ◆ Cutting cost – hospitals can significantly reduce their waste disposal cost through process changes with no up-front cost
- ◆ Appeal to ideal – doctors and nurses are there to cure people, not to cause more problems thru what they do
- ◆ Set themselves apart – this type of project is great PR, and build community relationship



Not One Size Fits All Solution

- ◆ Hospitals are large bureaucracies. Must tackle multiple points within the structure, and create cultural change:

Top managers

Doctor

Nursing staff

House cleaning staff

Purchasing agents

Facilities managers

Vendors

Waste hauling contractors

Local Associations

State/Local TAPs



For More Information:

Check out the H2E website at:

www.h2e-online.org

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